

In the fight for a more perfect Union, we can, we should, and we must think bigger and bolder. Through policies like those that are outlined in the Black Women Best economic framework—which include everything from guaranteed basic income to sweeping criminal justice reform—we can bring the Black community from peril to prosperity. When we do that, we bring everybody else along with us. Only then will all Americans have the freedom to thrive.

Today, we celebrate this turning point in our Nation's history. Today, we look back on the milestones we have achieved since then. Today, we continue fighting for that more inclusive, that more equitable, that fairer society that really represents the best that America can be.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for bringing to our attention some very unique aspects, again, of the Congressional Black Caucus and her work.

As I travel the country, it is interesting to hear that our community has been so deprived as it relates to the discrimination against you with respect to your hairstyle. Congresswoman BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN, among other things, was able to lead on something, and I hear it often, that they are so proud of this legislation because it has given dignity to people whose dignity was taken away.

These are the building blocks that the Congressional Black Caucus pours into the symbolism of honoring Juneteenth and H.R. 40, the commission that studies slavery.

Madam Speaker, as I prepare to allow for an additional speaker to come, let me make this point—let me just take this moment as we prepare to yield.

Madam Speaker, would you give us the time, please?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 26 minutes remaining.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, let me put this into the record as I prepare to yield, and emphasize what H.R. 40 does. As I do so, let me emphasize why H.R. 40 is so important.

This is what you see—it is the hanging of Black men, and it is the presence of individuals who are making a spectacle of this. There is one Black man already on the ground. There is no evidence of a trial, no evidence of guilt. This is an example of what preceded 1865.

When you talk about H.R. 40—or even when we were trying to make Juneteenth a Federal holiday—I introduced resolutions over and over again and finally got the bill introduced as a Federal holiday, which then we proceeded and worked to get it passed. There was always a question: Why?

There was always a question about this issue of freedom. You are already free. You live in America. The same goes for this issue of: Why H.R. 40? Because the continuing—continuing—ailments that ailed our community did not end.

This was obviously not in 1865. This was into the 1900s, the 20th century, as evidenced—or maybe the late 1800s that Black men were being hung, Black women were being raped and separated from families, and the abuse of racism was deep and abiding. The Klan would raid and burn communities, hospitals, churches, homes, and have a reign of terror.

This work of the Congressional Black Caucus, with the many splinters of legislation, can be culminated by the passage through a vote on the floor of the House or through an executive order that clearly would provide an answer to the language here that says:

Following the abolition of slavery, the United States Government, at the Federal, State, and local levels, continued to perpetrate, condone, and often profit from practices that continued to brutalize and disadvantage African Americans, including share cropping, convict leasing, Jim Crow, redlining, unequal education, and disproportionate treatment at the hands of the criminal justice systems, and lack of access to healthcare. Harvard University said, If we had it, we would not have been that impacted by COVID in terms of dying and sickness. This is a symbolic depiction that racism and discrimination continue to exist.

This legislation was updated to say: And develop reparation proposals. That is the key. It is an action item. We want a response to Black America; a response to African Americans; we want a response to the 57 members of the Congressional Black Caucus—coming from a variety of districts—some with small measures of African Americans. Yet, the recognition of wherever they live in America, and as our members represent all people, millions of Americans, they understand the stark disparities they see even in their congressional districts.

That is why we stand here today, to honor Juneteenth which equals freedom. That is why we are here today, to say that we are never giving up the fight. We are most proud of the fact that we collectively came as a body, embraced our work as individual members, and got Juneteenth signed. We will now go into this week speaking about freedom, but also speaking about truth and the work we have to do.

Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield to gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY).

CELEBRATING JUNETEENTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. JACKSON LEE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. BEATTY. Madam Speaker, tonight we have heard from leadership in the Congressional Black Caucus and leadership in the Democratic Caucus of the United States Congress.

Madam Speaker, I thank Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE for threading the needle, for reminding us of the history of how we started; 1863. And then 2 years later in 1865 when it was announced that Juneteenth would exist because Black people were free. Juneteenth, independence day, freedom day, all of it makes a difference for us because we know freedom is never given, it is won.

Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure now—another colleague from the great State of Ohio. Someone who knows the value and importance of fighting because she is a fighter. She is a sojourner who understands that her voice speaks for thousands of individuals, especially Black individuals.

It is a great honor to have a colleague that hails from the same State that I hail from, the great State of Ohio. She walks in the footsteps of Congresswoman Marsha Fudge, Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones, and a Congressman—one of the founders of the Congressional Black Caucus—Congressman Lou Stokes.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. BROWN), from the 11th District.

Ms. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, thank you for the kind introduction. I thank Chairwomen Beatty and all my Congressional Black Caucus colleagues for highlighting the significance of Juneteenth during today's Special Order hour.

Madam Speaker, the date was Monday, June 19, 1865; the location, Galveston, Texas. It was 2½ years after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation and 2 months after the Civil War ended, 250,000 enslaved Black people in Texas still did not know they were free.

That was until—on that Texas summer day—Federal troops rode into town and a Union general read aloud an order announcing their freedom.

Emancipation didn't happen all at once, and slavery wasn't formally abolished until the passage of the 13th Amendment later that year. That 19th day in June came to be known as Juneteenth, a day celebrating the end of slavery in America.

The year following the 1865 declaration, freedman in Texas organized the first of what became the annual June 19 celebration. Slowly but surely, Juneteenth celebrations spread across the country.

Last year, thanks to the hard work of my friend, my colleague, the dynamic incomparable Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE, President Biden signed a bill into law recognizing Juneteenth as a Federal holiday.

Juneteenth is a time to celebrate, and it is a time to take pride in the many contributions of African Americans to our society and our country across the generations.

It is also a time of remembrance and action. On Juneteenth, we acknowledge a dark period in our history and its lasting legacy of inequality and injustice—a legacy that continues to influence our country today. We have made

much progress as a Nation, yet we still have a long way to go. Progress is not possible without a full accounting of both our brightest days and our darkest nights.

As we honor those enslaved Texans who finally learned of their freedom 157 years ago, let us recommit to fulfilling the promise of Juneteenth—and indeed of our Nation at large—by fighting for equality, liberty, and justice for all.

Mrs. BEATTY. Madam Speaker, we stand here listening. We stand here revisiting our history. We stand here thinking about our ancestors.

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As members of the Congressional Black Caucus 50-plus-1-years-old, we understand that the fight must continue.

We understand when we walk in these hallowed Halls of justice that we carry that torch—that torch, freedom, that torch, justice and liberty for all. It is that responsibility that we acknowledge.

It is that responsibility when I think about the 173 Black people in the history of this Congress who have served out of some 12,000 people who have served in these Halls—173 Black people.

When I think about being the ninth Black woman to serve as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, I think of the other women: the sojourners and the truth tellers who served as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

I think of people like Congresswoman KAREN BASS, whom I followed.

I think about Congresswoman, and now Secretary of HUD, Marcia Fudge.

I think about Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS—who is one of six Black Members of Congress—serving as chair of the Financial Services Committee.

I think about Congresswoman BARBARA LEE from California who is always out in the forefront and reminding us of the words of Shirley Chisholm.

I think about Congresswoman EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, another colleague from the great State of Texas. She is a woman who reminds us about equality and justice and reminds us about the value of collaboration and standing together in unity. She is the founder of the Tri-Caucus. She is another fighter for justice, someone who mentors us and stands back and gives us enough room so we can lead and follow in her footsteps.

There are so many strong, Black women in the Congressional Black Caucus.

Then there are the men. There are 29 Members who are female and 29 Members who are male serving now in the Congressional Black Caucus.

So tonight, Madam Speaker, I say, thank you. The two most powerful words that one can say. I say thank you to our chair of our Special Order hour, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE.

As we begin to bring this night to a close, I am reminded of so many things

that great leaders have said. Someone said that liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth.

We have begun to take root as members of the Congressional Black Caucus. And we, too, have that same rapid growth of all the things in this Chamber we have brought to the floor, in this Chamber that we have voted out and sent to the Senate and to the White House to be signed into law. So often people will come up to us on the great streets of America, and they will say: Tell me, what is it that the Congressional Black Caucus is doing?

But, Madam Speaker, I say no more. No more will you question who we are. Because our power and our message of Black excellence, of lifting up and elevating our message and power has reigned through the United States of America because you see, Madam Speaker, when you talk about an executive order or police reform, it was the Congressional Black Caucus that was there when the President signed it.

When you talk about our dealing with student debt, it is the Congressional Black Caucus that just finished a 2-day issues conference. We brought before our Congressional Black Caucus issues forum 10 of the top civil rights leaders in America. They didn't bring or send a designee. They came themselves before us.

So I want to say, Madam Speaker, that tonight was about Juneteenth. But tonight was also about letting Americans know that we are fighting for them, that we stand with them, and that we understand that we must continue to fight against systemic racism, and we must continue to fight for our children and our families.

That is what we do because we are the Congressional Black Caucus. Our power and our message is Black excellence unapologetically strong.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, for over 150 years, June 19th, also known as Juneteenth Independence Day, has served as a source of reflection, inspiration, and hope for generations of Black Americans. It is a day when we are reminded of the trials and tribulations of those who came before us, and celebrate the incredible progress we have made. It is a day when we can rejoice together in the freedom and liberties that we all share, and recommit ourselves to everlasting equality and justice. It is a day that means so much, but for too long had not been formally recognized as a federal holiday.

That was, Madam Speaker, until our advocacy was finally met with action from the rest of Congress and the White House. I was proud to join my colleagues here in Congress and the Biden Administration last year to make Juneteenth a federal holiday. Now, just one year later, many more Americans understand and appreciate the day's history.

Today, I am especially thankful for Texas's very own, Ms. Opal Lee. Colloquially known as the "Grandmother of Juneteenth," Ms. Lee has worked tirelessly over the years to educate, inform, and advocate on behalf of the Juneteenth movement. I have had the pleas-

ure of meeting her several times over the years and am constantly reminded that we stand on the shoulders of icons like her.

Madam Speaker, I want to wish those in Texas's 30th Congressional District and across the country a Happy Juneteenth.

REVERSE THE CURSE: RESTORING FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. BROWN of Ohio). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Madam Speaker, tonight we are going to talk about a subject that gets too little attention in this Chamber and too little debate and consideration among lawmakers. Yet the storm clouds are gathering, and an epic crisis looms large over the future of our great Nation. Our mountainous and unsustainable national debt is the most significant, in my opinion, long-term threat to our economic prosperity as well as our national security. We have sown the wind of fiscal irresponsibility, and our children will reap the whirlwind of economic calamity. We will rob generations of Americans of the freedoms and the opportunities that we have enjoyed and have been so blessed with.

Madam Speaker, we all take an oath, but there is an unwritten covenant between lawmakers today and our Founding Fathers and our future generations of Americans, and that unwritten sacred promise that all American leaders have subscribed to is to leave this Nation better than we found it.

I believe the question is still hanging out there. The jury is still out on whether our Nation's leaders today in this generation are willing to make the sacrifices necessary to take on what I believe is the greatest challenge of the 21st century, and that is this unsustainable, unconscionable, and even immoral fiscal path that we are on. It is a collision course with a disastrous future.

We have to do something. We have all the reforms and policy solutions. But what we don't have and what I have not seen in now 6 years in this Chamber is the collective political will to do something about it. It is very simple.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to be joined by fellow lawmakers who I know share these sentiments. One such man hails from Ohio's Sixth District. He is a dear friend, he is a patriot, and he is a veteran. He has served on the Budget Committee. He is the co-chair of the Problem Solvers Caucus, a task force on addressing our broken budgetary processes and getting our arms around the debt and reining this in.

Madam Speaker, I am so glad he has joined us tonight. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOHNSON).

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.